

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 1, after the title, please insert as follows:

This application is the US national phase of international application PCT/IB03/00138 filed 23 January 2003, which designated the US and claims priority to IT Application No. MO2002A000016 filed 24 January 2002. The entire contents of these applications are incorporated herein by reference.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 3 line 7, as follows:

Each opposing projection 5 is located further forward, in relation to the advancing direction F, compared with the relative traction pin 3 at an axial distance shorter than the step P between the containers. ~~It is preferable that the~~ axial distance between the opposing projection 5, located further forward, and the relative traction pin 3, located further back, ~~is~~ could be significantly shorter than the step P between the containers: in particular it is shorter than at least half of the step P. The opposing projections 5 and the traction pins 3 ~~are preferably~~ may be made by thermoforming; they are substantially formed by deforming the film material with which the containers are formed and along the same forming line as the containers.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4 line 10, as follows:

The guide 6 extends along an advancing direction that is parallel to the longitudinal axis of the strip. In the case in point, in which the advancing direction F of the strip is horizontal, also the guide 6 extends in a horizontal direction. The advancing guide 6 is defined laterally by two running surfaces 7 that are parallel to one another and are provided to contain the longitudinal edge zone of the strip 1, i.e. the zone provided with the traction pins 3 and the opposing projections 5. The running surfaces 7 ~~are preferably~~ can be flat and vertical.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 4 line 20, as follows:

The flexible dragging member 8, which is prearranged for conveying forwards the strip 1 of containers, is looped in a closed ring. The active branch of the flexible dragging member is the top horizontal branch, which is located underneath the route of the strip 1 and on which the strip ~~preferably~~ could rests. If the advancing route of the strip 1 is particularly long, a sequence of flexible members can be used that are arranged one after the other at a preset distance from one another so as to ensure the strip dragging along the entire route. Each flexible dragging member is movable in a direction that is parallel to the preset advancing direction F of the strip and has one or several thrust elements 9 prearranged to interact by contact with the traction pins 3. The thrust elements 9 are distributed

along the dragging member, ~~preferably for example~~ at a constant step, in such a way that at least one of them is always engaged with a traction pin 3 of the strip.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5 line 2, as follows:

In the case in point, in which the advancing direction F of the strip is horizontal, the thrust elements 9 protrude vertically from the flexible dragging member 8, whilst the traction pins 3 and the opposing projections 5 protrude horizontally. When a thrust element 9 comes into contact with a traction pin 3, the opposing projection 5 associated with that pin interacts by contact with the running surface 7 facing the projection, so as to oppose the (horizontal) flexure of the strip 1 of containers due to the action of the thrust element 9. In order ~~for that~~ the opposing action ~~to be effective, preferably each opposing projection 5 is~~ could be placed slightly forward in relation to the advancing direction F, compared with the relative traction pin 3, at a short distance from the pin. Said distance ~~is preferably~~ could be shorter than twice the width of the advancing guide 86. In the case in point said distance is slightly shorter than the sum obtained adding the height of the traction pin 3 to the height of the opposing projection 5.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 5 line 19 as follows:

The width of the advancing ~~seat 8~~ guide 6, acting as an advancing seat, i.e. the horizontal distance between the two running surfaces 7, is substantially equal to or slightly greater than the horizontal distance, considered in a direction that is perpendicular to the advancing direction F, between the lateral ends (right and left) of a traction pin 3 and of the relative opposing projection 5.